

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEHRAN 05402 200738Z
ACTION NEA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3119
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 5402

LIMDIS
NOFORN

BRUSSELS FOR USNMR

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, XF, UR
SUBJ: AUDIENCE WITH SHAH

REF: TEHRAN 5346

1. DURING JUNE 18 AUDIENCE WITH THE SHAH, I FOUND HIM
PARTICULARLY DEPRESSED ABOUT THE ARAB-ISRAEL SITUATION.
AFTER A RATHER STAGY EXPLANATION OF ARYAN NATURE OF IRAN, AS
WELL AS DISTINCTION BETWEEN IRAN AND "MIDDLE EAST", SHAH
WENT ON TO EXPRESS DISMAY OVER CURRENT SITUATION IN ISRAEL.
HE ALSO WORRIED ABOUT FUTURE OF SADAT, AND ENDED WITH CON-
CLUSION THAT THINGS SEEM TO BE HEADING FOR DISASTER. HE
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PAGE 02 TEHRAN 05402 200738Z

PREDICTS THAT "THE RUSSIANS WILL BE BACK" IN 18 MONTHS.

2. THE SHAH NOTED THAT SOME OPINION HAD BEEN EXPRESSED
"IN THE WEST" THAT BEGIN, BECAUSE OF HIS HARD-LINE REPU-
TATION, WOULD BE BETTER ABLE TO NEGOTIATE ON ISRAELI TERRI-
TORIAL WITHDRAWAL THAN SOFT-LINERS WHO WOULD BE UNABLE TO
JUSTIFY CONCESSIONS. HE FELT THIS WAS SERIOUS MISREADING

OF BEGIN, WHO IS IDEOLOGICAL RATHER THAN A PRAGMATIST. HE PREDICTED TROUBLE FOR THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION, "ESPECIALLY WITH YOUR ISRAELI LOBBY IN THE CONGRESS." HE WAS VERY WARM IN HIS PRAISE OF VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE'S SPEECH ON THIS SUBJECT (WHICH HAD BEEN DELIVERED ONLY A FEW HOURS BEFORE THE AUDIENCE).

3. ON SADAT, HE SAID HIS INFORMATION WAS THAT HE HAD "ALMOST GONE UNDER" IN THE FOOD RIOTS LAST YEAR. ONE MORE SET-BACK AND HE MIGHT BE FINISHED. HE WAS ALREADY MAKING MOVES TOWARDS MOSCOW. DESPITE PRESS REPORTS OF TOUGH CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN THE SOVIETS AND FAHMI, HE INTERPRETED THE EGYPTIAN OVERTURE AS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW DEPARTURE IN SADAT'S POLICY. (SADAT, INCIDENTALLY, IS SCHEDULED TO TAKE A VACATION IN IRANIAN RESORT OF RAMSAUR ON CASPIAN NEXT MONTH).

4. AS FOR THE SOVIETS, SHAH SEES THEM RUBBING THEIR HANDS IN SATISFACTION. ALL THEY HAVE TO DO IS WAIT FOR THE ARAB-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS TO COLLAPSE. THEN THEY WILL BE INVITED BACK IN. THIS WILL HAPPEN WITHIN 18 MONTHS UNLESS SOME MIRACLE CAN CHANGE ISRAELI POLICY. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, THE BA'ATH AND THE IRAQI WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO ACT MORE BOLDLY, ESPECIALLY IN SAUDI ARABIA. THE CURRENT SAUDI REGIME DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO COPE WITH THAT SORT OF PROBLEM AND COULD BE IN DEEP TROUBLE.

5. COMMENT: I DO NOT KNOW THE SHAH WELL ENOUGH TO DETERMINE WHETHER THIS GLOOMY OVERVIEW REPRESENTS HIS REAL ASSESSMENT OR A DRAMATIC OVERSTATEMENT FOR DIPLOMATIC EFFECT.
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PAGE 03 TEHRAN 05402 200738Z

THE DIRE PREDICATIONS, OF COURSE, FIT HIS CASE FOR JUSTIFYING ADDITIONAL WEAPONS DELIVERIES TO IRAN.
SULLIVAN

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